

CONTACT: Office of the Governor
Pete Smith (601) 359-3150 or (601) 720-8733
Rebekah Staples (601) 359-3150

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GOVERNOR BARBOUR ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION
IN TOURISM RESTORATION GRANTS

(JACKSON, Mississippi) – Governor Haley Barbour today announced approval of \$5 million in federal grants to help Mississippi's tourism industry promote and market areas most heavily impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

"Mississippi's tourism industry generates xxxnumberxxx jobs and is critical to our state's continuing recovery from the worst disaster in American history," Governor Barbour said. "These grants will help local tourism agencies spread the word that we're open for business with a wide variety of attractions and events."

In response to Hurricane Katrina, Congress appropriated disaster recovery funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to assist the five impacted states. The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) is the agency charged with administering the state's CDBG disaster recovery funding, including the \$5 million federal grant money for the Mississippi tourism industry.

For these particular grants, MDA's Tourism Division competitively rated grant recipients based on the following criteria:

- effectively marketing South Mississippi and the Mississippi Gulf Coast region as a tourism destination - both nationally and internationally;
- highlighting Mississippi's family attractions, festivals/events and cultural assets unique to the areas most affected by Hurricane Katrina;
- demonstrating an effort to market the most impacted areas to conventions, media, travel trade and other related markets; and,
- restoring business investor confidence in the region.

Hurricane Katrina had a devastating effect on museums and disrupted a well-established arts and culture environment in several cities along the Coast. In the two years since the hurricane, several facilities are

fully functioning. Organizations such as the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center are currently entertaining children, holding theater productions and providing local school support. Others are in varying stages of repair and planning, such as the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art and the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum.

Recipients of the tourism grants include: Mississippi Hotel & Lodging Association, Cruisin the Coast, Inc., Coast Golf Tourism Partnership, Mississippi Gulf Coast Attractions Association, Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, Hancock County Tourism Development Bureau, Harrison County Tourism Commission, Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center, Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, Inc., Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center; '08 Event Marketing Plan, Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center; '09 Event Marketing Plan, The Mississippi Gulf Coast Billfish Classic, City of D'Iberville; '08-'09 Event Marketing, Smokin the Sound, Inc., Beauvoir, The Jefferson Davis Home and Presidential Library, Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center; '08 Coast Crawfish Festival, Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center; '09 Coast Crawfish Festival, Highlands & Islands Association; Scottish Highland Games/Celtic Music Festival, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory; Summer Promotion Marketing, Gulf Coast Search & Rescue, Inc.; Cajun Swamp Festival, Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce, Main Street & Visitors Center, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, The Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Stone County Economic Development Partnership, and Picayune Main Street, Inc.

For more information on these and other grants, please visit MDA's website at www.mississippi.org.